



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

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Kind Statement on BRAC: Western Wisconsin Bases Survive; Fight Continues to Preserve Fort McCoy Jobs *Fort McCoy Slated for Realignment; Volk Field Untouched*

La Crosse, WI – Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) issued the following statement today in response to the Department of Defense (DOD) announcement of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) list of recommendations for restructuring military resources to best serve current national defense objectives. The Fort McCoy realignment plan includes a net loss of 282 military jobs and a net gain of 51 civilian jobs.

“Today’s BRAC announcement involves a mix of both good news and bad news for western Wisconsin,” said Rep. Kind. “While I am pleased that Fort McCoy and Volk Field will both remain open, I am concerned that Fort McCoy’s realignment plan involves the loss of 232 jobs. In keeping these facilities open, the Department of Defense clearly recognizes their essential value and importance in supporting our national defense objectives. I am, however, disappointed with the Pentagon’s recommendation for Fort McCoy’s downsize, and I intend to appeal that plan to the BRAC Commission in the months ahead.”

Kind added that although Fort McCoy is recommended for a net loss of 232 jobs as a result of the 84th Army Reserve Regional Training Center moving to Ft. Knox, TN, it may be in line to see expanded operations due to the proposed transfer of command centers from Minnesota (88th from Ft. Snelling, MN) and Utah (96th from Ft. Douglas, UT). This recommendation creates a Northwest Regional Readiness Command Headquarters (NRRCH) at Ft. McCoy.

“This is the beginning of a long process,” Kind said, noting that the BRAC Commission will begin a months-long review of the recommendations before sending a final list to the president. “As we move into the next phase of the 2005 BRAC process, I intend to work together with my congressional colleagues, Governor Doyle, and local leaders to protect these bases and the jobs that support them and the economy of the surrounding area.”

Rep. Kind has been heavily involved in cooperative efforts with Wisconsin’s congressional delegation and Governor Doyle to illustrate the strategic military benefits of the two bases and their positive impact on the region. Additionally, Rep. Kind wrote letters to DOD officials, including Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and met earlier this year with Defense Undersecretary Phillip Grone, one of the lead Pentagon officials shaping the BRAC list, to make the case to preserve western Wisconsin’s military bases.

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The BRAC list and accompanying data are now forwarded to the independent BRAC Commission which will conduct an open review of the DOD recommendations before sending a final list to the President. Public hearings will be conducted by the commission over the next few months. The commission must submit their final "all-or-nothing list" to the president before September 8, 2005. The president can approve all of the closures and realignments or reject the entire list. Upon approval, the list goes to Congress, where the House and Senate have 45 "legislative days" to disapprove the list. If Congress fails to act, the list automatically is approved and has the "force and effect of law."